



Planning Brief

TRANSPORTATION

February 2012 | Focus on...



TRANSPORTATION BONANZA 3 **APA MI**

February 16, 2012
Lansing Center
8:00 a.m. – 5:45 p.m.

Join Clearzoning President Rod Arroyo at his 2 p.m. session, "It's the Law: Transportation and Accessibility in the Master Planning Process"

Important Federal Legislation on Transportation

The last major legislation on transportation expired in 2009, and short-term fixes have been in place since that time. The current bill expires March 31, 2012.

Transportation is one of the most important issues of the 21st Century. Moving goods and people efficiently and effectively in, around, and across our country (and world) is something we have done well over the last one hundred years. Now, however, we face the challenge of decades-old roads and bridges that are in serious need of repair. In tandem with that, we face rising costs of automobile ownership as well as a desire for a greener, more healthy lifestyle that generates a real demand for non-motorized transportation options—from cities to suburbs. Traditional funding, from gas tax revenues, continues to decline along with the economy. Because transportation affects myriad aspects of planning, from land use to economic development to recreation to social equity to the environment, we believe it is important to raise the awareness of the Federal funding situation. On February 3, the House Ways & Means Committee approved a transportation bill that features the following:

- o \$260 Billion for roads, bridges
- o Revenue from expanded oil and gas drilling leases, including in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
- o Changes that "streamline" the environmental-review process
- o Consolidation of about 100 programs into 30
- o Changes name of "Mass Transit Fund" (which has existed since 1982) to "Alternative Transportation Fund," and moves funds from former "Mass Transit" account to Highway Fund
- o Calls for \$40B to Alternative Transportation Fund, but from General Fund, making it discretionary spending, not a part of the \$260 billion apportionment
- o Eliminates Transportation Enhancements Program, which required states to spend 2% of their federal funds on non-motorized transportation, such as shared use paths

What are the implications? The funding level may not be enough to make all the highway and road repairs needed in the country. And Non-Motorized Transportation? Under this bill, states will have to assess road and bridge projects with non-motorized transportation projects. Many advocates of non-motorized transportation are urging their supporters to voice their concerns. In fact, the legislation is opposed by groups that don't often take similar positions: the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American Planning Association and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) are among over 500 groups that oppose the proposed House bill. In particular, all of these groups oppose the removal of dedicated funds for multi-modal transportation.